

# THE MESSIAH'S CALL TO HIS DISCIPLES

## MATHEW 10:01–04

### ***Introduction***

The apostles were called earlier to be “fishers of men” (Mt. 4:18-22; 9:9; Jn. 1:35-51). Each one had been called in his own special way from his environment. Christ was now calling the apostles to go forth in the fulfilment of their first call. In a sense, we may say they were *called twice* (see Mk. 3:14; Jn. 12:26).

1. They received their *commitment call*. They were to receive formal training, learning how to become “fishers of men.”
2. They received their *commissioning call*. They were to receive practical training, actually go out to “fish for men.”

There are several important facts given about their commissioning call.

- I. They were called “to Him” (v. 1).
- II. They were given power and authority (v. 1).
- III. They were twelve in number (v. 2).
- IV. They were made apostles (v. 2).
- V. They included three sets of brothers (v. 2).
- VI. They were organized two by two for ministry (vv. 3-4).

### **I. *Mathew 10:01 Disciples were Called “to Him”***

The disciples were called “to Him” (Christ). There are three steps in the call of the disciples to the ministry.

1. *The discipleship call*. They heard about Christ, went to hear Him, and began to follow Him just as many others did (see Jn. 1:35f).
2. *The commitment call*. There were multitudes of people following Christ, but He noticed the unusual commitment of these twelve men. At this point, He called them to the ministry: to leave all and to begin a period of special training in order to preach and teach professionally. Note Lk. 6:13 where Jesus called His disciples to Him, and from among the many whom He called, “He chose twelve of them whom he also designated apostles.”
3. *The commissioning call*. Christ commissioned them to go forth with the message of salvation.

***Thought 1.*** The disciples who had been *with Jesus* for some time had touched, talked, shared, communed, prayed, meditated and fellowshiped with Him. They had shared

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and been taught the Scriptures by Him and probably had been taught how to preach and teach. They certainly had witnessed His preaching and teaching and how He went about both. Several lessons can be learned from this.

- 1) Every believer needs to be *with Jesus*. We must all learn to quietly meditate on and study His Word and commune with Him in prayer.
- 2) Every servant needs to go through a period of preparation and training before being sent forth. A servant must first be proved (1 Tim. 3:10).
- 3) A personal relationship, *being with Jesus day by day*, is essential for ministry. There is no substitute for the training a person receives at the feet of Jesus studying His Word, learning from His Spirit, and communing with Him in prayer.

**Thought 2.** Note three lessons.

- 1) A person must first be trained, then he can become qualified to serve.

**Mat 5:1-2** *Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them, saying:*

**2 Tim 2:2** *And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.*

- 2) The major prerequisite for ministry is to be “with Jesus,” learning from Him and His Word, communing with Him in prayer and in quietness.

**Psa 1:2** *But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.*

**Psa 46:10** *“Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.”*

**Psa 145:18** *The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.*

**2 Tim 2:15** *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.*

**James 4:8** *Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*

- 3) Public ministry requires two forms of preparation or training.
  - a) Private preparation with Christ: *being with Him* all alone (2 Tim. 2:15).
  - b) Public preparation or formal training: observing and learning from Christ as He ministers through others (Mt. 5:1f; 2 Tim. 2:2).

**MATHEW 10:01 CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP**

*He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. **Mathew 10:01***

The call of the disciples is a precious study. Jesus called them “to Him”; He chose them “to be with Him” (Mk. 3:14). They were called out from among many followers (Lk. 6:13). □

**II. *Mathew 10:01 Disciples were Given Power and Authority***

The disciples were given power and authority. The power to heal and cast out demons was given to prove that Christ was truly the Son of God (Mt. 9:6; Jn. 10:25-26). The apostles were given the same authority and power because they were being sent in His name. They were proclaiming Him and His message to be true; they were proving it by the power given them.

*1 Tim 1:15 Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners — of whom I am the worst.*

The major thing that the miracles teach is this: God truly loves and cares for us here and now, physically. His care is not only for the future and for our spiritual welfare, but His care is for our deliverance in the here and now (the Great Redeemer).

*Luke 10:19-20 “I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”*

*Acts 1:8 “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*

*Acts 4:33 With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all.*

*Acts 6:10 But they could not stand up against his wisdom or the Spirit by whom he spoke.*

*Eph 3:19-20 And to know this love that surpasses knowledge — that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.*

*2 Tim 1:6-8 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline. So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God.*

**Thought 1.** Note three lessons.

- 1) A servant's power is derived from his master. The believer's authority is derived from his Lord.  
=> This is great assurance. The Lord's servant does not face the world alone. He has supernatural authority and power behind him, the very power of the Lord Himself.  
=> This is great responsibility. The Lord's servant has no right to strike out and act alone. He is to carry the message and deeds of the Lord, not his own message and behaviour.
- 2) The authority and power given by the Lord *concerns ministry* not position, wealth, fame or earthly dominion. The Lord's servant is given power to *reach and help people*. What a lesson for the motives and actions of God's servants, both lay and clergy!
- 3) The power given by the Lord is directed against the devil and evil spirits that control men. It is a spiritual warfare, fought against the evil that possesses the minds and hearts of men.  
=> There is the evil of false teachings and doctrines or beliefs that are always so prominent among mankind (1 Tim. 4:1).  
=> There is the evil of deceptive and fleshly behaviour that has always enslaved men (2 Tim. 3:1-7, 13).  
=> There is the evil of some who rebel so much that they are given over to walk almost exclusively after the flesh (2 Pet. 2:10).

### MATHEW 10:01 POWER AND AUTHORITY (EXOUSIA)

The Greek word means authority. Christ was giving *His own authority* to His messengers. They were sent forth by Him on His special mission; therefore, they were given His authority and power to minister.

Notice that the power to save or convert the lost is not given. Why? Only God can save and penetrate the spiritual world or dimension. Man's authority is limited to the physical world and dimension. □

### MATHEW 10:01 UNCLEAN SPIRITS; EVIL SPIRITS

*He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. **Mathew 10:01***

Evil spirits are spirits of unholy, polluted, immoral and unjust behaviour; they are spirits belonging to the ungodly realm of darkness. Two things need to be said about evil spirits at this point.

1. Christ accepts and teaches the presence and reality of evil spirits. He sent His apostles forth with the authority to cast them out.
2. Throughout human experience, most beliefs have extremes that arise and surround the truth of the belief. Note several facts that every thinking and honest person knows about this fact of human experience.
  - a. The extremes of a belief range from extreme liberalism (denial) all the way over to extreme conservatism (superstition).
  - b. The fact that some carry a belief over into superstitious behaviour does not mean that there is not truth in the belief. It does not mean this any more than the denial of a belief means the belief is untrue.
  - c. The fact that some may and probably do misread and carry the belief in evil spirits over into the area of the superstitious does not mean there are not evil spirits. Christ did accept their presence, and He taught the fact of their existence to His apostles. (See notes, Lk. 8:26-40; Mt. 8:28-34.) □

### **III. *Mathew 10:02 The Call of the Twelve Disciples***

The disciples were twelve in number. A teacher, including Christ, can adequately teach only so many. Note that Christ taught some things to the multitudes; then He taught more to a much smaller number (Mary, Martha, Lazarus and some others); and finally He taught all things to a small band of men (the twelve apostles). We might say that He taught all He could to a small band of disciples who were to carry on His life's work (see Jethro's advice to Moses, suggesting that Moses organize the people into groups of ten for more efficient rule, Exo. 18:17-26).

There are two thoughts at this point.

**Thought 1.** How much we need to heed this method that Christ followed — the method of making disciples out of a few while ministering to the many. And note: the twelve were not to be administrators for Christ. They were to be ministers for Christ, men who would do the same work of ministry that He did. They were to carry on the ministry He had begun.

**Thought 2.** What would happen if every minister and teacher (lay and religious) disciplined just twelve persons in their lifetime, twelve who would carry on some kind of ministry? How long would it take to reach the world with the gospel?

## MATHEW 10: 02 APOSTLES

*These are the names of the twelve apostles:.... **Mathew 10:02***

Why did Christ select twelve special apostles instead of some other number? There are several possible reasons.

1. There were twelve tribes of Israel. Israel had been the first called to be the people of God (Gen. 12:1-5). Christ wanted to reach out to Israel first and to give them a last chance. Therefore, He wanted an apostle to represent each of the twelve tribes, to equal the twelve patriarchs of Israel, that is, to equal Jacob's sons. The number twelve was symbolizing that He was making an attempt to reach all Israel.
2. The Jews had been the first called by God (Gen. 12:1-5). Therefore, they were to be the first called by God's Son. The twelve apostles were to be the representatives of Christ who were to bring Israel's twelve tribes to God the Father. Note an important fact: Christ said the twelve apostles were to judge the twelve tribes of Israel (Mt. 19:28; Lk. 22:29-30).
3. The twelve apostles were to be the patriarchs, the heads, the apostles of the new Israel (Rev. 21:14; Jas. 1:1; see Gal. 6:16; see Rom. 2:28-29). □

### IV. *Mathew 10:02 Disciples were Made Apostles*

The disciples were made apostles (See, *Apostle*, Mt. 10:2). Note several things.

1. Christ Himself is called an apostle; that is, He was the messenger of God sent by God Himself. (See Heb. 3:1.)
2. These twelve men were also to be called apostles; that is, they were to be the messengers sent by Christ Himself.
3. There is a sense in which the ministers of every generation are the Lord's apostles, His very special messengers. They are the men who are sent forth by Christ to be His representatives. There is a lesson here in that God's people should respect the Lord's messenger as His special apostle.

**John 1:6** *There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John.*

**Jer 3:15** *Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding.*

**Jer 23:4** *"I will place shepherds over them who will tend them, and they will no longer be afraid or terrified, nor will any be missing," declares the LORD.*

**John 21:17** *The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."*

**Acts 20:28** *Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.*

**1 Pet 5:2** *Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers — not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve.*

**Isa 48:16** *"Come near me and listen to this: "From the first announcement I have not spoken in secret; at the time it happens, I am there." And now the Sovereign LORD has sent me, with his Spirit.*

### MATHEW 10:02 APOSTLE (APOSTOLOS)

To send out. An apostle is a representative, an ambassador, a person who is sent out into one country to represent another country. Three things are true of the apostle.

=> He belongs to the One who has sent him out.

=> He is commissioned to be sent out.

=> He possesses all the authority and power of the One who sends him out.

The word *apostle* has both a narrow and a broad usage in the New Testament.

1. The narrow sense. It refers to the twelve apostles and to Paul as an apostle (Acts 1:21-22; 1 Cor. 9:1). In this narrow sense, there were at least two basic qualifications.
  - a. The apostle was a man chosen directly by the Lord Himself or by the Holy Spirit (see Mt. 10:1-2; Mk. 3:13-14; Lk. 6:13; Acts 9:6, 15; 13:2; 22:10, 14-15; Rom. 1:1). He was a man who had either seen or been a companion of the Lord Jesus.
  - b. The apostle was a man who had been an eyewitness of the resurrected Lord (Acts 1:21-22; 1 Cor. 9:1).
2. The broad sense. The word "apostle" refers to other men who preached the Gospel. It is used of two missionaries: Barnabas (Acts 14:4, 14, 17) and Silas (1 Th. 2:6), and two messengers, Titus (2 Cor. 8:23) and Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25). There is also a possibility that James, the Lord's brother (Gal. 1:19), and Andronicus and Junia (Rom. 16:7) are referred to as apostles.

In the narrow sense, the gift of an apostle was bound to die out because of the unique qualifications to receive the gift. But historically, in the broad sense, there

is perhaps a sense in which the qualifications and gift itself are still given and used by the Lord. The Lord's servants of all generations must *see* the Lord and know Him intimately. Similarly, we must personally *see and experience* the power of the resurrection. Certainly there are some in every generation who have *so seen* the Lord Jesus and who *so know* and *so experience* the power of the Lord's resurrection. Perhaps the Lord Jesus endues some with the very special gift of an apostle to be used in a very special way throughout His most precious domain — the church. □

## V. *Mathew 10:02 Brothers Made Disciples*

The disciples included three sets of brothers (See *Disciples*, Mt. 10:2). Note the influence of families upon children. Six of Christ's apostles, one half of the inner circle, were apparently from *closely knit* families. The brothers respected each other enough to listen and follow one another (see Jn. 1:40f).

### MATHEW 10: 02 DISCIPLES

The disciples who were brothers were Simon Peter and Andrew, James and John (the sons of Zebedee), and the other James and Lebbeus. (See Note, Lk. 6:14-16.) □

## VI. *Mathew 10:03–04 Disciples were Sent Two by Two*

The disciples were organized two by two for ministry.

**Thought 1.** Christ seemed to arrange the apostles two by two; note how Mathew groups them by twos. Several lessons can be immediately drawn from this.

- 1) We need each other, someone with whom we can be close in fellowship and ministry.
- 2) We need to go forth together two by two.
- 3) We need to organize for ministry.

**Thought 2.** Note the humility that Mathew teaches. He is the writer of this great Gospel, yet he demonstrates the ingredient so necessary for the servant of Christ (Phil. 2:3-4; see Rom. 12:10).

- 1) He mentions Thomas, his partner, before himself. The other two gospel writers place him before Thomas.
- 2) He again mentions his terrible past — that he was a publican and a traitor to the Jewish nation (See *Mathew, Tax Collector*, Mt. 9:9-13).

**Thought 3.** The presence of Judas Iscariot, a betrayer, did not permanently affect the others. Christ can and does overrule, working all things out for good (Rom. 8:28). ■